Claims

1. A method of enhancing a video bit stream using temporal scalability, wherein peak signal-to-noise ratios of bidirectionally predicted pictures in an enhancement layer are determined with reference to the peak signal-to-noise ratios of pictures in another layer.

2. A method of enhancing a video bit stream using temporal scalability, wherein the number of bits allocated to encode a bidirectionally predicted picture of an enhancement layer is determined with reference to the number of bits used to encode a picture of another layer.

3. A method of enhancing a video bit stream using temporal scalability, wherein temporal positions of predicted pictures in an enhancement layer are determined to be spaced evenly with reference to temporal positions of pictures in other layers.

4. A method according to any two or more of claims 1 to 3.

5. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 4, wherein the peak signal-to-noise ratios are made similar.

6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the other layer is a base layer.

7. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein characteristics of more than one picture in another layer are considered.

8. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein:
(i) a first enhancement layer uses SNR scalability to produce enhanced pictures; and
(ii) a second enhancement layer uses temporal scalability to produce enhanced pictures, based on temporal positions of pictures in the first lower enhancement layer.

9. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein an average number of bits used to define a predicted picture and an average number of bits used to define a picture in the another layer are used to define a weighting value.

10. An apparatus which implements a method according to any preceding claim, the apparatus including:
means for selecting temporal position, PSNR and/or number of bits of a bidirectionally predicted picture based on information relating to a picture in another layer.

11. An apparatus as claimed in claim 10, which is adapted to encode video signals for transmission via a mobile communications system.